



Newsletter

July, 2007

Issue No. 15



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ACTING DECISIVELY

“Now then, revere the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and truth. Reject the gods which your ancestors served beyond the river and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. However, if it seems wrong in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose today whom you will serve Nevertheless, I and my house, we shall serve the LORD!” Joshua 24:14-15

I like Joshua's style. Like a good leader, he laid out the facts. He exhorted those about him to get off the fence and get their spiritual act together. He encouraged personal authenticity and strong commitment...but not once did he pull rank and fall back on intimidation to get his way. He risked being ignored and rejected when he left the final decision up to them. He respected their right to follow his advice or walk away when he told them, in so many words, “Make up your mind!” But there was never any question where he stood. He had weighed the evidence, considered the alternatives, and come to a solid conviction – he and his family were going to serve the Lord God, no question about it. But what others would do was strictly up to themselves.

Unusual combination. A strong leader who knew where he was going, but gave others the space they needed to choose for themselves. No threats. No name-calling. No public put-downs. No exploitation or manipulation or humiliation. He didn't play on their emotions or attack their alleged ignorance or use some gimmick to gain strokes in defense of his position. He knew what God would have him do, and he realized the consequences of their choosing differently...but

they needed to weigh those issues for themselves. It needed to be their decision, not his. At that point, he backed off and said, “Now you decide.”

That's not only smart, it's an evidence of two admirable virtues: security in himself and respect for others. Today, it is clear to all of us that Joshua made the right decision back then. From our objective perspective, he chose the correct alternative.. as they also did later on. But note again that he didn't hurry his people to opt for his position. Joshua knew that if they didn't wrestle with the issues on their own, the resulting decision might be superficial...fragile...a commitment that might very well melt under the inevitable heat of difficulty and trial.

Galatians 2 gives us an example of how and why Paul exhibited decisiveness. Please read this completely for yourself.

Gal 2:5 “We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the Gospel might remain with you.” He had a clear objective.

Gal. 2:6“whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not judge by external appearance – those men added nothing to my message.....” Nothing affected his judgment and understanding..

Gal 2:14....“How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?

He challenged them to think what they were doing..

Gal 2:19 “For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God.”

He proclaimed who He followed, the Lord God.

Many of you will soon be experiencing changes in your life again. Some will be returning home, others broadening your world view by going to other countries to work and live, still others changing your schools where you will be working. I want to challenge you to be like Joshua and Paul. Be decisive in your spiritual choices you make. Think carefully, act wisely, and let the truth of the Gospel remain in you as a lasting testimony of His love for you.

God bless you. Have a safe journey wherever you may be headed and may the angels embrace you, the Holy Spirit give life to you when you need strength, and may your eyes always be focused on our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Christian love. Becky Ishii



WELCOME TO JAPAN

Festivals & Holidays



July 2007

Unfortunately – and it is very unfortunate indeed, we do not have a single holiday in August. Our next holiday is coming up way in the middle of September. *Sigh*. Nevertheless being in Japan and experiencing all this country has to offer, both the quaint and not so quaint – makes up a little for the lack of a holiday.

So instead I am giving you a bit of a history lesson and a bit of trivia. Enjoy! There might be a quiz after. At least you should be able calculate how old you are using the Japanese calendar.

Japanese Years

The traditional Japanese calendar is based entirely on the reigns of its emperors. In Japan, AD 2007 is Year "Heisei 19," and this "19" means that it is the nineteenth year of the "Heisei" Era, the reign of Emperor Akihito. Though this system is not specifically designated as the "official calendar," it is used by most Japanese people just as commonly as the Gregorian calendar.

The year an emperor ascends the throne is the first year of a new era, and the era stays the same as long as the emperor reigns. For instance, Hirohito ascended the throne on December 26, 1926, and that day, the new era, "Showa," started; "Showa" lasted for 62 years and two weeks, until his death on January 7, 1989.

The present Gengo, "Heisei," meaning "Achieving Peace," was unveiled only six hours

after the death of Hirohito. The new year, "Heisei 1," officially began at midnight, January 8. Therefore, 1989 is regarded as both Year "Showa 64" (the first 7 days) and Year "Heisei 1" (the rest of the year).

The following is a break down of the different periods in Japanese history.

Edo	Meiji	Taisho	Showa	Heisei
1603 until September 7, 1868	September 8, 1868 to July 29, 1912	July 30, 1912 to December 24, 1926	December 25, 1926 to January 7, 1989	began on January 8, 1989

Calculate your birthday Japanese style

If you were born in say July 1, 1975, then on some of your cards like your National Insurance card, your birthday will be listed as Showa 50, April 12. How did I calculate it? Well I am sure you Math Geniuses will know of an easier way but MY way is this:

1. We know that it is the Showa era because 1975 falls between December 25, 1926 and January 7, 1989.
2. Subtract 1925 (because you were born before December 25, 1926) from 1975 (your real birth year) and viola - the answer is 50

Now it's your turn.



WELCOME TO JAPAN

Monthly Top Ten

If you're anything like me, you've dreaded the coming of summer since, well, last summer. But time stops for no one, and here we are, a year later in the middle of July with over a month to go. Ever wonder how the locals stay cool in Japan? Read on, dear missionaries...

“Top ten ways to beat the heat, Japanese style”

10. It's soba slurping time!

Soba, one of the oldest forms of Japanese noodles, is an essential summer dish. Zarusoba (complete with cold broth and a pile of ice to guarantee a chilled meal) is noted for its flavor, texture, and “pleasant sensation as it goes down your throat,” and will cool you down from the inside out. Western table manners can be put aside for the moment because slurping up your noodles is the standard way to enjoy this dish.



9. Fuji-san ni ikou!

No trip to Japan is complete without a hike up Mt. Fuji. I know, you're probably thinking that all the physical exertion is only going to make you hotter. But believe me; it gets really cold, even in the summer. In fact, I never made it to the top because it was hailing. Hey, give me some slack. I was in grade school.

8. Suika-wari

A quintessentially Japanese summery thing to do, and about the only time hitting your food is perfectly acceptable. I think of it as the Japanese version of a piñata, only healthier, messier, and a lot safer. To do: grab a large watermelon, tarp, wooden rod, blindfold, and a bunch of kids. Place the watermelon on the tarp, blindfold a child, whirl him around a few times, and let him take a good swing at the melon. The game ends when the watermelon cracks open. Itadakimasu!

7. Get your scares at the cemetery

My father recalls a strange form of punishment he experienced as a child in Japan. Apparently, my grandmother was convinced that he had stolen a snack from the family-run store, so she tied him to a gravestone that night and left him to “think about what he had done.” Brr...gives me the chills just thinking about it. Admit it, even you hate walking by one at night. But for Japanese children, a night at the cemetery is the perfect opportunity to 1) cool down, and 2) prove to the others just how courageous you are. I am not making this up, and although I believe it would be pretty chilling, I also believe that some things are best left untried. Just ask my dad.

6. Eating “Kakigouri”

Shaved ice back home in the States is



pretty boring. In most cases, large flakes of ice are doused with brightly-colored artificial flavors like lime, cherry, blue raspberry, bubble gum, and tutti-frutti (which tastes exactly like bubble gum, only worse). But in Japan, the ice is a bit finer, the flavors a little more natural, and the toppings a tad more creative. Feeling brave? Go ahead and order one with red bean paste, green tea syrup, pieces of jelly or even mochi.

5. A trip to the bookstore

I'll admit, this one is a bit outdated, but it was popular when few Japanese homes had air conditioning. Called “tachi-yomi” (literally stand and read), children would quietly duck into an air-conditioned bookstore while the owner wasn't watching, hide behind a tall bookcase and pour over the newest comics.

4. Eel-eating days

Ok, so for obvious reasons, this one is out for us. But eating broiled eel on “Doyo Ushi no Hi” (the hottest day of the season, according to the ancient Japanese calendar), is believed to be an effective way to beat the heat. Just how? Well, one of my students claimed that eels are known for their strength, so eating eels strengthens the person who eats them. Great! Now I'm off to find myself a witty dolphin or two for breakfast because I could really use some extra brain cells. If only it worked that way.

3. When in Japan, dress like the Japanese

When I first came to Japan, I actually thought Japanese women were a bit chubby. After all, why was everyone wearing loose-fitting clothes? Perhaps they started their “ten weeks to a slimmer, healthier body” exercise routine nine weeks too late. Well, a few walks to the local grocery store was all it took for me to realize that I did NOT enjoy the feeling of a tight, sweat-soaked shirt on a hot, humid day. And no, the average Japanese person is not fat. This too, I learned firsthand when I went shopping and realized that I didn't fit into a lot of the clothes. Sigh...I must have eaten too much broiled eel.

2. Pepsi Ice Cucumber Soda!

With sales in Japan lagging behind Coca-cola (surprise, surprise) Pepsi launched its newest flavor of carbonated liquid in hopes of making up for lost profit. Apparently the creators wanted a flavor that would “make people think of keeping cool in the summer heat.” Cucumber—would not have been my choice of flavor. No, this light green soda doesn't actually have any cucumber in it; and no, I haven't tried it, but since it's available only during the summer months and only in Japan, I figure it might actually be worth a taste. But cucumbers and soda? Hmm...seems like a recipe for a disaster. Burp, burp. Excuse me.

1. Ditch #2-9

If all else fails, grab one of those little fans, a 2-liter bottle of Pocari Sweat, sit on the tatami floor and do absolutely nothing. Finally, a use for that pretty fan sitting on your shelf!

A Missionary Blogs



Amy, a past missionary who served in Japan, blogs about her adventures in the classroom.

Left- Amy and her two cute nephews! Click on picture and adjust to make bigger.

Unexpected Impact

Hey...

I know that I said I wasn't going to blog again until school started again, but I remembered a story I wanted to share and didn't, and I had something happen tonight that I HAD to share.

First, the story that I didn't share. South Carolina has an end of the year testing called PACT. I was really nervous about NOT looking at the test questions (as people have lost their jobs over that) and I was doing my best not to mess up. So what do I do? I mess up! I passed out pre-coded answer booklets to the WRONG people. All I had to do was read their name off the top and give it to the appropriate student. Did I do it? NO! Jesse relieved my stress by making me laugh by saying, "You can tell she's a new one!"

Tonight I received a phone call from two of my former students, Ariel and Jennifer. They were bored and were calling to say hello. After conversing mindlessly for a few minutes about their trip to Carowinds and Myrtle Beach, and me telling them about my recent trip to Maryland, I figured if they called it's because I have a connection and I might as well take the opportunity to try to influence them to achieve greatness. I told them, "Ladies, I don't want to be walking by a TV set one day and see you two on Jerry Springer... you are better than that. I want to see you on Oprah being interviewed as Jennifer, the world's best brain surgeon, and Ariel, who is running for US Senator."

Well they got a kick out of this. Jennifer told Ariel that she needed to run for president. Ariel replied, "George Bush? Shoot, I want to be Dick Cheney. That way I can shoot people and

say I didn't see them. I can say, 'Sorry, I thought you were a deer.' " Ah, the future of America...

One of my friends, Chase, (he was a student of my practicum mentor the year before I came and frequently comes over to help us grade papers) was in a car accident recently in which he drifted into oncoming traffic and had an SUV drive over the top of his car. He had a very bad gash on his forehead and was blessed to even be alive, according to those who saw the end result of his car. He has an L shaped wound on his forehead and said it stands for "loser." I told him it stands for "loved". He sent an email tonight that I wanted to share.

Hey everyone!

I just would like to say thank you for all the prayers, support, and love given during my recovery. I get the staples out of my head next week, and I'm recovering from my concussion. Knowing I have been in each of your thoughts has really made this ordeal so much easier. I am still here only due to our Heavenly Father's wishes. I would like to ask that no one take life for granted like I have and please cherish every minute you have with your family and friends, serving the Lord in everything you do.

He is only 16 years-old, but he has a lot of wisdom.

So, I will close and if any other crazy students should call, I will be sure to share the story. (The repetition of consonants sounds I just used is called alliteration.)

Road trippin' this summer like a mad woman,
Amy

Our Missionaries say “Farewell”

Summer Greetings!



I can't believe that my Japan Experience is almost up. I feel that time is on fast forward...don't you feel the same? Can someone please press the pause button so that I can get to enjoy every minute of the remaining time I have here.

Where should I start? What should I say?

Being in Japan has first and foremost strengthened my relationship with God, I love him deeper everyday. I have learned how to cope with my brother's death by keeping focus on God and talking to him daily.

God has truly blessed my time here; I've met and worked with wonderful people. I am so happy that I had Carmen as my roommate, she is hard working, great people person, dedicated worker and above all she is enthusiastic to serve God, I admire her so much.

My students were great, I strived to do my best and also to challenge them; I hope I wasn't too hard-I will miss my students dearly! I have enjoyed learning about the Japanese culture, I respect and appreciate it; I know some of the language-my Japanese is basic but that's ok for now.

I loved eating my favorite Japanese dishes- udon, yaki soba, tey machi zushi, kawarada soba, tempura, curry rice-etc. All vegetarian of course. I am happy that I got the chance to try new things in Japan; snowboarding, visiting the cave, going to the golf driving range, strawberry picking, etc. I have written in my journal all my adventures and there is not enough space here to list them all.

In Japan I was exposed to the Korean culture through their dramas- winter sonata, spring waltz, summer scent, wonderful life, etc. I even learned some Korean words; who doesn't enjoy a good love story. I also learned about the Indian culture as well; I have watched a few of their movies, which usually teaches the viewers deep lessons about life,

love and family; I also ate at Ganesh quite a few times- absolutely delicious!

I have been inspired by the church members and their dedication. Since I don't know much Japanese I wasn't able to tell them how much I truly appreciated their kindness and how eating potluck with them made me feel as though I was a part of a family. Everyone that I've met touched my life in a special way, if I were to write all the names, there wouldn't be enough space. You are all etched in my heart.

In Japan my favorite stores were 100 Yen shop and Uniqlo; those were the only shops that I could really afford, I know its funny but I liked shopping there. I was so happy that I got to visit Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Himeji, Hiroshima and a few other places...what an adventure I had.

Looking back over the year and seeing how much God has blessed Carmen's time and my time here, is really amazing. We were able to plan many events for our students and community. We wanted to see everyone not only learning English but having a great time and building friendships. As I said before there is so much I want to say, but there is not enough space to say it.

So what should I do for my last month in Japan? Well...buy souvenirs, pack and do some fun activities! What have I learned from my Japan Experience? I have learned that- 1- God is as close as the air we breathe, -2- people need love, kindness and humor, -3- don't try to do everything by yourself, -4- always be grateful for what you have, -5- gift giving from the heart brings joy. Remember these things also; you will see how much your life will change.

I won't say goodbye because I don't like goodbyes and also one day soon I hope to visit again- I will say until I see you again may God keep you in the palm of His hands. I will honestly miss you all.

Let's keep in touch!



Our Missionaries say “Farewell”

It’s time to say so long.....

Two years have gone by very quickly. I really can’t believe that it is now time for me to say so long again. When I think of Tokuyama, my experiences and everyone here, two words come into my mind, thankfulness 🙏 and love ❤️.

I am so thankful that God allowed me to come to Tokuyama. I am so thankful for the church members, staff, and students here at the Tokuyama SDA English School and the experiences we have shared together. I am thankful for the times that we laughed together, ate together, studied together, worked together, and played together. Most of all, I am thankful for the love that everyone has shown through each wonderful act of kindness and thoughtfulness. 🎁 They have even brought tears of joy to my eyes at times. I have felt God’s love through you.

I look forward to enjoying the rest of this month with you and to the time when we can meet again. I look forward to us keeping in touch. 💻 I do hope to come to Japan again and you are welcome to come wherever God places me in the future. 😊

Let us pray for each other. If we do not meet again on this earth, I pray that we will meet together in the air when Jesus comes back and that we will be able to go to heaven and have a good time together there. 🌟 Until next time....Much love, Carmen

Farewell, My Missionary

Our lives were touched for once forever through a hallowed vision

the day ere thou wouldst heed the call to leave abroad for mission.

For there that moment, though I never saw thee ere that while,

did I not better know thee when I gazed beneath thy smile?

Yea, deep I sought beneath thy joy to witness deeper yet

the Spirit living in thy heart, the Lord Whom I have met.

Hence sing we forth His praises, thou my sister, I thy brother,

akin by blood through faith in Christ to love now one another.

For I have surely witnessed Christ, alive to work through thee,

and thou hast witnessed deep within the Lord Who lives in me.

What better love could mortals share? Immortal love we show

since, bound forevermore in Christ, we love the Lord we know.

by Michael Rew

Returning Home

So you have returned home and have been asked or volunteered to share your mission experience with your church or youth group. Here are some very useful tips I copied from the AVS website. Visit the site for tons of other useful info.

Story Telling Tips

1. Record stories.

To help you remember - keep a journal. The sounds, smells, sights and conversations will quickly be forgotten without it.

2. Prepare a one-minute summary. People, not remembering where you went, will politely ask, "How was your trip?" Use that chance to share your experience in brief. Use a short story.

3. Take the initiative. Arrange for settings where you can share your experience - Sabbath school, youth meetings, prayer meetings - invite people to your home.

4. Speak up. Speak as clearly as possible. A story told well in a clearly audible voice will convey your excitement. Practice diction.

5. Start strong. In your opening, aim at arousing interest with curiosity. Never start with an apology. Try to create anticipation.

6. Paint verbal pictures. Help your audience visualize the scene (the squeaky chair, the smell of incense, children splashing in a puddle, your own feelings at the time). Select important things. Remember the basic five: who, what, where, when, and why. Avoid jargon your audience will not be aware of.

7. Illustrate your story. Dramatize. Act out a conversation with facial expressions, verbal inflections. Use your photos, but only the best, and keep them moving fairly quickly and in the sequence of your story. Don't just flash slides on a screen with a running commentary. Using objects may be appropriate when making a point.

8. Focus on People. Stories that touch the hearts of listeners are stories of people. Programs, plans, and policies are important, but they are to serve people. In your stories and pictures, focus on people, their faces, thoughts and emotions.



9. Convey important lessons. Stories can hold the attention of an audience. But you are not there merely to entertain. Every experience can serve to illustrate a biblical principle. "You can't outgive God!" or a quotation from scripture, "And the greatest of these is love!" is helpful. But don't belabor the point.

10. Accentuate the positive. Relate the challenges you have faced in a hopeful spirit. Don't bemoan your trials - use a little humor. Your isolated conditions were not the end of the world, but you could see it from there! Rather than condemning your listeners for their materialism, challenge them to see the tremendous opportunities to invest in the Lord's work around the world.

11. Encourage interaction. Give opportunity for questions, and listen. Answer specifically, even if your answer is "I don't know." Supportive comments, such as "That's a good question," or "Did you catch the significance of Jack's comment!" set a good tone.

12. Stop on time. You may be asked to give a "short report." Don't despair. Just give a condensed version. Don't go beyond the time limit.

To sum it all up:

Don't miss the opportunities to tell your story. God uses people with a story, like Hudson Taylor, to spark modern missionary movements.

He can use you, too!

Based on "Tell the Story: How to Communicate with Others When you Return," in *Stepping Out: A Guide to Short Term Missions*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing 1992.

Ways to stay involve

- * Share your experience with others
- * Give reports in your church
- * Get involved in a Conference on Missions
- * Support other volunteers preparing to go
- * Increase your mission offerings
- * Learn foreign languages
- * Continue to study "your" people and their culture
- * Get involved in local community services
- * Consider a longer-term mission service

Visit this site for more on the above

<http://www.adventistvolunteers.org/returningHome/returningHome.htm>

Odds and Ends

Prayer Chain

Please remember to keep active the ELS prayer chain. San-iku College prays for Harajuku prays for for Yokohama prays for Osaka prays for Hiroshima ELS prays for Hiroshima Academy prays for Tokuyama prays for Hayato prays for Kagoshima prays for Okinawa Junior High School Prays for San-iku College.

Prayer Requests

^ If you have any prayer requests please send them to us. We'd be very happy to pray for you.

Sayanara to:

Arup Pandey – Hayato ELS
Frank Ouko – Hayato ELS
Carmen Rhodes – Tokuyama ELS
Trudy-Ann Dawes – Tokuyama
Mervin Nihal – Hiroshima ELS

We have appreciated your year(s) of service here in Japan. I am sure that you will never be forgotten.



Give us one year and we will give you a wonderful, unforgettable experience

Thank you for your interest in Japan's English Language Schools. We have closed applications for this school year but if you are interested in the 2008 - 2009 school year, we'd be happy to have you. Keep in touch.

Pastor Mark Duarte, pastor at the Mountain View Japanese Church has been serving the Japanese community for over 2 decades since being a missionary in Japan as a student missionary. He is available to answer any questions or counsel regarding your desire to go to Japan as a missionary. He spent many years in Japan with his wife as a missionary and now resides in Mountain View, California. The work in Japan is very close to his heart. Contact markduarte@hotmail.com and type "Interest in Japan" in the subject line. He is looking forward to hearing from you.



Thanks to all who contributed for this month's Newsletter. If you would like to contribute, please send all items to juc@adventist.jp

